

# **INPRS 2020 Emergency Response Report**

## **1. Overview of which operations or services were reduced or suspended during the pandemic including whether the suspension or reduction was required by an executive order.**

INPRS Staff collaborated across all functional areas to continue operations as close to business as usual. INPRS maintained all services to our members and employers via the execution of our Business Continuity Plan (BCP). Benefit applications were processed and payments were made as scheduled. No known obstacles or barriers to future payments. In-person services have been transitioned to almost 100% virtual services that pre-existed COVID-19 with 90% of the INPRS staff transitioning to remote work. In a general sense, all services were provided, with no services being suspended, other than the in person counseling sessions. Face-to-face service was suspended. Workshops and appointments were successfully moved to video conferencing and webinars.

### **a. To the extent applicable, include citations for the laws, rules and policies affected by or authorizing the preparations.**

One aspect of operations suspended involved two specific medical evaluations that are required as part of the 1977 Fund baseline examination. The baseline examination is required by IC 36-8-8-7(a) for all new firefighters and police officers before they become members of the 1977 Fund. IC 36-8-8-19 provides that the baseline examination is prescribed by the INPRS board which also shall adopt minimum standards for the examination by rule. An administrative rule lists the components of the baseline examination. Specifically, 35 IAC 2-9-4(b)(2) requires that audiometric tests and pulmonary function testing be completed. INPRS temporarily waived these two tests due to the risk of infection to medical staff. Local Boards were able to administer all other tests and hire individuals to be police officers and firefighters on condition that when local medical authorities were able to administer such tests, that the results would be sent to INPRS.

A second area of INPRS impacted by COVID-19 involved Executive Order 20-21 that allowed for members impacted by COVID-19 to gain access to their defined contribution (DC) monies, incorporating into state law the Federal CARES Act which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. As allowed by the CARES Act, the executive order permits active and inactive state employees, county employees, teachers, and other public employees who have a defined contribution account to access funds without penalty if they have been affected by COVID-19. Specifically, members are allowed through Dec 31, 2020, to take up to \$100k distribution from any defined contribution plan. The only requirement in order to take a distribution during this time is that the member only needs to self-certify that they meet a COVID criteria as expressed in the CARES Act. This would allow active members of any age and service and inactive members without 30 days of separation the ability to access their defined contribution account.

The member impacted by COVID would be able to withdraw funds with also the following advantages: (1) that the federal 10% early withdrawal penalty for those below 59 1/2 is waived; (2) the plan is not required to withhold 20% of the distribution and instead of including the income and paying tax all in the same year, the member can spread the income and pay the income tax over 3 years, unless the individual elects to waive; and (3) repayment as a rollover is allowed within 3 years.

The language of the Executive order suspended specifically IC 5-10.2-3-6.5 (PERF and TRF), IC 5-10.3-12-26 (PERF), IC 5-10.4-8-12 (TRF) and IC 2-3.5-5-6 (LEDC) to the extent necessary to allow INPRS discretion to administer PERF, TRF and LEDC defined contribution plans for active and inactive members pursuant to the CARES Act for calendar year 2020.

**2. Overview on preparations to address future emergencies and recovery based on the agencies experience with COVID-19.**

INPRS outreach transitioned to group meetings and one on one counseling sessions to webinar/video conferencing for groups as well as individuals. Relying on online resources has proven very effective in reaching members and will likely continue as services transition back to normal.

INPRS functional areas looked to digitize paper-based processes. INPRS also implemented Docusign to help alleviate issues where a physical signature was needed. INPRS has definitely improved our ability to not rely on paper for most processes.

**a. To the extent applicable, include citations for the laws, rules and policies affected by or authorizing the preparations.**

None.

**3. Recommendations, if any, for legislation that may be needed to help ensure the agency is prepared to address future emergencies.**

No recommendations.

**4. Recommendations, if any, for legislation to permanently repeal or modify any regulations or laws that were or are partially or fully suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

No recommendations.